

May 11 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Let me tell you, I generally believe Presidents should not receive awards because the job is award enough. But I love this. And every day I have left here, this award will be on my desk in the Oval Office, and I hope you get to see it on television.

Thank you. Bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:28 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Congressional Action on Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation

May 11, 2000

I am pleased that Congress has completed action on historic legislation that will boost investment, growth, and opportunity in Africa and the Caribbean Basin, while improving the global competitive position of our own industries. This step reaffirms America's commitment to open trade and strengthens the partnership between the United States and our friends in Africa and the Caribbean Basin. It will encourage these

nations to continue building open economies, bolster their efforts to alleviate poverty, and improve long-term prospects for democracy and stability around the world. I look forward to signing this measure into law and congratulate Members of Congress from both parties who have worked so hard to enact the "African Growth and Opportunity Act" and the Caribbean Basin trade enhancement legislation.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Conservation and Reinvestment Legislation

May 11, 2000

I am very pleased by the overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House today to provide significant new resources to meet America's critical conservation and recreation needs. Today's vote on H.R. 701, the "Conservation and Reinvestment Act," is a historic step toward achieving permanent conservation funding—a goal embodied in the lands legacy initiative I put forward in my budget this year. I applaud Chairman Young, Representative Miller, and others for their leadership on this effort.

We will continue working with Congress to secure protected and permanent conservation funding within the framework of a balanced budget that provides for critical budget and fiscal priorities, and with no burdensome or unnecessary restrictions on Federal authorities that have proven so effective in preserving America's natural heritage. I urge the Senate to move swiftly on this legislation. I am confident that working together we can create a permanent conservation endowment that will be a true gift to future generations.

Statement on the Situation in Sierra Leone

May 11, 2000

U.N. Secretary-General Annan and I agreed this morning that the international community

must intensify international efforts to restore peace in Sierra Leone and to prevent a return

to all-out civil war. The situation there has been grave. But the U.N. is determined to fulfill its mission; African and other nations are willing to act; and we are ready to help them.

I have instructed our military to provide needed assistance to accelerate the deployment of troops to UNAMSIL and informed the U.N. that the United States will help transport reinforcements. A U.S. military transport aircraft is now in Jordan to move ammunition and supplies that are needed immediately for the Jordanian elements in Sierra Leone.

We intend to support the commitment West African nations have made to send additional troops to Sierra Leone to restore peace. A U.S. military team is now in Nigeria to determine

what assistance might be needed from the international community to outfit and transport these forces as quickly as possible.

I welcome the statement West African leaders made on Tuesday at their emergency summit in Abuja, Nigeria, calling for the release of all hostages and pledging to protect democratic institutions in Sierra Leone.

I have asked Rev. Jesse Jackson, my Special Envoy for Democracy in Africa, to return to the region to work with leaders there for a peaceful resolution of this crisis. Reverend Jackson has been actively involved in our diplomatic effort to help the people of Sierra Leone realize their peaceful aspirations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense

May 11, 2000

Dear _____:

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical and Biological Weapons Defense, submitted pursuant to Condition 11(F) of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the United States Senate on April 24, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives;

John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services.

Remarks in an Interview and Townhall Meeting on ABC's "Good Morning America"

May 12, 2000

[*"Good Morning America" cohosts Charlie Gibson and Diane Sawyer welcomed program participants and described the goals of the Million Mom March against gun violence, scheduled for May 14th in Washington, DC.*]

Charlie Gibson. We are here in the Oval Office with the President, who is joining us this morning. It's nice to have—nice to be here. I shouldn't say nice to have you with us, since